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Victoria's Restaurant

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FROM THE EDITOR BLAH BLAH BLAH



Spring may finally have arrived! If the squirrels don't eat everything in the garden, we may even see flowers soon. Amazing that the brutal forces of winter finally gave up.

When spring hits, so does the annual ISCCA Ball. This year it was held at the Quality Inn in Calgary and as usual there was a sea of rhinestones, hair spray and attitude! There were queens from San Diego, Hawaii, Seattle and an assortment of Leathermen from Alaska, Vancouver and Winnipeg.

During the night, various people were on stage performing at all levels of entertainment. I favoured the Winnipeg queens, as they were in sync with each other and they all had fabulous stilettos on! I wonder if any of their legs ached the next day like mine did?

The queen from Hawaii was interesting to watch and the Vancouver number, made me long for the sea. The evening was full of laughter, friendly socializing, a lot of alcohol consumption and there is always a very comforting underlying sense of "family", acceptance and belonging. There are many groups that come together for this event; a true mosaic of people. When groups like Sharpe Foundation and Beswick House come out to pay their respects, you can feel a very sad but genuine link that pulls everyone

together in the room. The ugly fact that we have ALL lost someone we really liked and/or loved to the cruel reality of AIDS hits in full force.

I was thrilled to see that Hady and my good friend Ron have been accepted to represent our city on behalf of the Gay Court of Calgary. It's not only good to see a leatherman back in the spotlight, but a pair that seem determined to raise money for the community and put fun into the whole idea of the Court System. So, Bravo to Hady who has just been named the *Fall Down go Boom Empress* (thanks to a spill she took just off stage) and to Ron the *Fall Down and Cry Emperor*. Actually they have longer handles but that's all I can remember.

If you have ever been wondering what you are missing, find out where a Ball might be held in your city and GO! It's the perfect chance to mingle with others, show off your new clothes, strut your stuff and take notes on how others swing their hips and apply makeup.

It's good to see the girls out at functions. Our own Birthday party is around the corner; another excuse for a new outfit! If any of you are thinking of running for Empress or Princess, don't be overwhelmed. Come in and talk to us, as we would like a chance to talk to each of the contestants about our expectations and your concerns. We hope to have a "Miss Congeniality", someone who will welcome new members and with a team, help make the Illusions evenings memorable.

Thanks to the gals who are sending in bits and pieces for the magazine. We need your input. Lots of love.

Darbie

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COVERGIRL

Eisha

The original "Spice Girl"

Likes:

Xtredz rubber

Dislikes:

Buff, burly, drywall guys who just don't *get it*.

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE:
JUNE 9**

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FROM THE EDITOR DEAR READER

Discrimination, intolerance, fear and hate. We have all seen it in varying forms and some of us have experienced the unpleasantness that it causes. When you are part of a minority and you are visible, you increase the risk of having to cope with people's inability to accept something or someone that is different.

I am constantly disenchanted by people that you would think would be able to show compassion for someone who has a different lifestyle than the general public. Recently I was having a discussion with some friends of mine. They told me of a comment that was made at a particular "Alternate Lifestyle" event that really got my back up. It went something like this, "What are they doing here. Don't they know this is a gay and lesbian event? Some of them even brought their wives!" In case you haven't figured it out yet, these individuals were talking about crossdressers being at one of "THEIR" events. However, you could substitute any other minority other than crossdressers into the picture and now perhaps you can understand why this has such a potential for disastrous results.

Before you start organizing protest marches and sending letters to your local rights activist, remember that this was a few individuals and not an opinion given by an entire community.

I guess what got me going was this wasn't advertised as a "Gay and Lesbian-only" event, but was an event that had various components of the "Alternate Lifestyles" attending. If it had been a function for a specific group, then those comments I suppose are understandable, as all types of groups need exclusive space from time to time. However, if you put yourself or group in a position where all you see is your view of the world, you certainly are going to miss all the various flavours of life that is available to you.

Being part of perhaps one of the smallest visible minorities, that being an out transsexual (less than 0.01% of the population), I see and hear the way people treat someone that is different firsthand. It takes a great deal

I see and hear the way people treat someone that is different firsthand.

of courage to be different and live your life according to your own heart. Consequently, it bothers me when people of one social minority group, people you would think should know better, attack people of another social minority group. I'm not just talking gay, lesbian, TV, TS, leatherfolk, rubberists, bisexuals, I'm talking about anyone who shows intolerance towards another person just because they are different. To me that kind of attitude is totally unacceptable! Hopefully, through education and just being out there we can affect some change to the societal intolerance in which some of us are forced to live.

I closed my last article with the following comment and I think it has merit with this one so at the risk of being repetitive. I hope that you the reader will perhaps gain something from the varied views presented. We live in a very diverse culture with wide spectrums of interests. We as TV's, CDers, TS's et al, have arguably a common thread running between us, but none of us have the exact same interests and ideas about how life is best to be lived. Let us as a group celebrate our diversity, be open minded to changes and views that are divergent from our own. Remember none of us are at the same level in our personal pursuit of life and happiness!

In T-Bars and Tolerance,
Christine

THE MAIL YOUR LETTERS

Hi! How is it going? I really enjoy the new look and format of the Illusion Magazine! Keep up the fabulous job! I wasn't too impressed with how my picture turned out, which can only mean that it is time to post a new one. I would love to be a cover girl; I'll provide a photo for you in the near future. I wish you both all the best.

Ursula #41

I haven't had a chance to get out to a social yet but as I'll be living in Brooks from May to August I expect to make it to a few this year. Can't wait to meet with the girls!

Grace #428

Hi, I would like to compliment you on the new format for Illusion magazine, it definitely looks more professional. As a person that is involved in writing as part of my normal work, I offer the following suggestion: The new format might be better received if the content is subject specific toward the title "Erotica" and "Crossdressers, Drag Queens & Admirers" and include the folksy club stuff as an insert for club members only. There should be enough Club members to make that work and it would reinforce the core membership concept that should provide the base for the magazine. I remember a conversation with a member about the financial needs to keep everything in place and therefore will support all your changes as much as I can.

Gloria #290

Editors Reply: The above suggestion has been made before and I believe was in Barbie's last article. There are two problems with it: 1) Trying to find people to do this insert on a consistent basis would, I believe, be near to impossible as over the years we have asked for articles and submissions and received very few. Leaving the workload squarely on the editorial staff. 2) There would be an increase in postage costs (as we are now just below weight) to include an insert not to mention the increased time involved in actually inserting same. Should someone be willing to make the time and financial commitment we would certainly entertain the concept.

I was surprised to see my little submission in the latest issue. Nice graphics, I appreciate it. I noticed "Stitches" was absent from her usual spot, I hope it was a space problem.

Barbie mentioned in the editorial a while back about doing a commentary on "People who misrepresent themselves", I have been waiting for that one and still hope to see it! Some people think that you are too

rough with your commentary but for some reason I can't get enough of them. I just have to admire someone who speaks her mind, even when it is a sure bet that some feathers will be flying! I hope that everything settles down for everyone soon. I would be interested in trying out for the "Cover Girl", I can dream can't I. Lisa's challenge of a few issues back got under my skin and now I can't shake it. I'd want to do it right though. If you think I can help contribute something of value, let me know, as I'd like to take another swish at the writing thing. Best of luck...& kisses too!

Nikki #374

What a surprise to see a little paragraph from me in your magazine, I didn't think I fit your format. I am pleasantly astonished to see that you take care to represent my remarks as they were intended. I will send more comments and stories soon as I wish to be a supporter of the club. My next step will be to send a picture of "Annie" for the registry. You have opened a door for me as I now have somewhere to pursue my freedom of speech as a crossdresser! I really enjoy your work and

Pluck.



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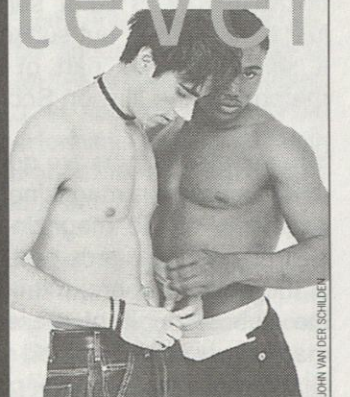
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THE MAIL YOUR LETTERS

magazine, so I promise to stay in touch with you for a long time. Thanks again for this new feeling. I am now a happy out of town cross-dresser (Quebec).

Annie (Mark)

I am writing this letter to express my feeling about the changes to the Illusions Magazine. I deliberately held off writing until I saw the second issue so that I would not "over react" to the first issue. I have also considered carefully the reasons you gave for making the changes, and the opinions expressed by others both pro and con.

Yes, sex sells but does that mean we should be selling sex? Putting "Erotica" on the cover may sell more copies and therefore get "our message" out to more people, but what good does that do if it gets out the wrong message, and gets it to the wrong people? If you want to publish an "Erotica" magazine because that is what sells, that's just fine with me, but subscribing to it should not be part of being a member of the Illusion Social Club.

If membership dues are going to be used to pay for a magazine then the emphasis of the magazine should be to serve the needs and interests of the club members. When I joined the club a couple of years ago the magazine was oriented towards club members. The back cover was dedicated to explaining what the club was about and how to join. The first page had the Illusions Calendar of upcoming events, and the articles were either about the activities of the club members or articles about various aspects of crossdressing. It was a magazine I could show my wife to help her understand what the club was about and about crossdressing in

general. Now the back cover is an ad for B & B custom fetish clothing (nothing to do with Illusions), The list of upcoming club events are now hidden somewhere in the middle to the back of the magazine and mixed in with a list of events from other organizations. The list does not even make it clear which events are Illusions Social Club events.

The pages that publish letters have excerpts in large bold letters saying things like "I spend a delicious weekend playing the part of a filthy little slut", and "...only to then become aroused...". You now have an "Erotic Stories" section, and articles on the "Love of Rubber". The inside back cover is now an ad for fetish magazines.

So what is the message you are getting out, and who are you getting it to? The message I see is "cross-dressing is a sexual fetish", and the people who will see the message are those who are into sexual fetishes. Don't get me wrong, I see nothing wrong with people enjoying sexual fetishes, and I also understand that there is a sexual element to crossdressing for some of us. But this is no longer the kind of magazine a crossdresser can show his wife and expect her to think the club is not about sex and sexual fetishes. I don't think we need to convince people who are into sexual fetishes to accept us. We need to convince the general public (and our spouses, family and friends) that crossdressers are not sexual deviants, we need to convince them that crossdressing is not a compulsive disorder. We need to convince them that we are just ordinary men who express our feminine side through crossdressing.

What has made the Illusions Social

Club great is that it is not about sex, or sexual orientations. What makes Illusions different is that a person's sexual orientation is not a factor. We mix and mingle and support each other, and leave one's sexual orientation and preferences out of it. Illusions is not a "sex" club, Illusions is about expressing our feminine side, not our sexual side, so why should our magazine be a "sexually oriented" magazine?

On the positive side I saw some definite improvements in the second "new" issue. The picture on the front was not sleazy like the previous issue. There was also a lot less sexual content and emphasis. I hope the differences in the second issue reflect the fact that you have listened to the concerns of members and made changes to address them. I am not against change, I am not against you improving the quality of the magazine. I am concerned about the increased "sexual" content of the magazine and the move away from it being a magazine for and about Illusion Social Club and Crossdressing.

Christine Rose #321

Editor's Reply: When we took over the magazine and produced Issue 3-1, we took it into the retail arena and out of the realm of just a club newsletter. We have consistently tried to balance the content to please our club readers.

Unfortunately, we can't please everyone and continue to produce a magazine, never mind a quality magazine. We no longer say this is "The Club Newsletter of Illusions", nor have we for quite sometime. We have stated that it is a magazine for crossdressers and one that I believe is still of some benefit to crossdressers. The magazine is a value added to being an "ILLUSIONS"

...Continued on page 19

BOOKS REVIEW

Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to Ru Paul Leslie Feinberg

Boston: Beacon Press, 1996.

by Tim Eckert

For anyone wondering what "transgender" means, and for lesbian folks not familiar with how their history connects with people who cross-dressed or were perceived to belong to both genders, this book will prove to be a valuable, educational and yet captivating resource. Readers will be convinced of the need to include transgendered sisters and brothers in the lesbian struggle for liberation. This book underlines the connections between homophobia, patriarchy, the fear of people who seem to cross gender "lines," and oppression based on race and class.

Perhaps I should clarify that I do not self-identify as a transgendered person. This review should probably have been written by a trans community member. Still, the book really spoke to me as a gay man, because of the connections between the persecution of trans people and the discrimination faced by gay people -- the women ridiculed because they look or act "like men" and the men derided because they look or act "like women."

Feinberg, also the author of *Stone Butch Blues*, narrates her own story,

which was one of not fitting the gender "roles" which society was proscribing in the 1950s. S/he describes her struggles with gender identity issues, and how she began researching trans history, going back to Joan of Arc, who was burned at the stake for wearing men's clothing. Her research led her to investigate the Two-Spirited peoples of the First Nations (North American Natives), and the persecution and brutality they faced by Europeans. Feinberg examines cross-dressing and gender-bending in other cultures, from Greek mythology to West African rituals.

S/he posits that transphobia and homophobia became much stronger in Europe at the time of the Inquisition, when witches, Muslims, Jews, scientists and many others faced extermination. Until the Middle Ages, the "ancient respect for transgender had not been rooted out." Even though the Medieval Christian church was seeking to destroy such Celtic traditions as cross-dressing, this Mardi Gras and Halloween custom was never totally wiped out.

Feinberg also has stories of hope: trans people were often heroes (such as Joan of Arc) for oppressed people. Cross-dressed men in groups of "Rebeccas" and "Fairies" struggled against the exploitation of the poor in northern Europe. In at least one raid on a "molly" house, where male-to-female (men dressed as women) trans people would gather in London,

trans people fought back -- long before the Stonewall Rebellion!

I was reminded of the Kinsey scale and the need to reject dualistic thinking by Feinberg's arguments that gender too runs along a continuum: there are more than two sexes. Feinberg calls for the day when newborn intersexual infants will not be "fixed," when people will not ask, "Is it a boy or a girl?" and when parents would reply to such a question with, "We don't know, our child hasn't told us yet." The book also clarifies how unnecessary it is to fit the relationships of trans people into the boxes of "lesbian / gay," "bisexual," and "heterosexual." There is no obvious line from gender to sexual orientation: are a female-to-male trans person with a husband a heterosexual couple, or two gay men?

Even if you don't like to read, the illustrations in this book are an amazing collection: men arrested for wearing women's clothing, newspaper stories of "women who passed as men," ancient Greek intersexual statues, people who appeared in the documentary film "Paris is Burning" (about drag balls in Harlem), a bearded woman performing artist, and much more. The book also has lists of trans organizations and publications.

You may want to recommend this book to the next person you hear complaining that drag queens should not join in Gay Pride events.

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EROTIC STORIES THE CHECK UP

by Sara

The message on the answering machine was clear. "I'll be in to conduct a special check-up at 10a.m. Please be ready," Dr. Adams said. Nurse Sarah made sure that she was. She liked Dr. Adams a good deal more than professional conduct required, and she wanted to please him more than anything. So she took care to arrange the examination room; she put on a white rubber apron and new rubber gloves, and she began checking the day's appointments - wanting to look absolutely efficient when Dr. Adams came in.

"Good morning, Sarah". Sarah looked up to see Dr. Adams standing there all dressed in white and wearing rubber gloves as well. "I see you're gloved and ready," he said. "Good. We can begin."

"Who is the patient?" she asked.
Dr. Adams smiled. "Oh, this is a special staff examination."
"Me? But I don't understand..."

"Of course you do," Dr Adams said. "With your lace panties and your flirty manner. it's just what you need, my girl. Now open wide!"

Sarah couldn't believe it, but Dr. Adams had something up against her teeth - some sort of inflatable rubber gag.

"Open wide I said," Dr. Adams commanded. "Take it Sarah."

She felt the gag go way inside, and gagged a little as he began inflating it. She couldn't eject it, she discovered; she couldn't make a sound. "Just to be sure," he said, "let's put some tape over that." Sarah could feel the smooth gloved fingers laying strips of surgical adhesive across her lips and cheeks. "Good girl," he said. "That will keep you nice and quiet." He pumped the gag again for good measure. Nurse Sarah cried as the gag expanded. "Mmmmmmmmmmm!"

"Now we have you completely silent, we need to get you all trussed up so you don't wriggle too much and hurt yourself! Wrists behind your back, please!" Sarah did as she was told, and soon felt her wrists being taped together behind her. Once her hands were tied, he started taping up her whole body from head to toe, using an entire roll of surgical tape for the job until she sat there feeling like a mummy done up for the tomb. "Now, roll around on the floor and move your hips," he instructed.

Obediently, she began moving from side to side, rolling her hips, which didn't feel at all bad, she discovered, still responding to the excitement she had felt all that morning waiting for Dr. Adams to arrive. In fact, the exertions were turning her on, bringing on the most erotic thoughts. It was like doing a sexy dance in a way, a special bondage dance. "That's it, my lovely," he said. He was turned on too. She felt his hand on her feet, felt one of his feet rest-

ing lightly on her bound arms. Skillfully, he cut away the tape binding her and then helped her to lie across her own office chair. "I've always been fascinated by the sexual possibilities of this chair," he said. "So down you go, arms at your side and legs apart."

Again Sarah did as she said, but this time she knew fully why. She parted her legs and lay still while he bound her arms, wrists and ankles with white rope so she couldn't move. She moaned with relief as he deflated the gag in her mouth. But before she could say anything, Dr. Adams pushed a pair of surgical gloves into her mouth and put an enormous tape across her lower face.

"Silence, please, Sarah," he said when he had gagged her again. "I like seeing you gagged. Your body tells me all I need to know. And right now it's telling me a great deal!" "Mmmmmmmmm," Sarah said, trying to speak around the rubber gloves, trying to tell him any way how excited she was, how ready she was. "Tell me if you feel anything when I do this," he said, and he touched her.

"Mmmmmmmmm!" Sarah murmured, loving his touch, wanting it. "Good. And what about here?"

"Mmmmmmmmm!" she cried, pulling at the ropes which kept her there. "And now this?"

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmggggggggffffff!" she cried through the tape, biting on the rubber gloves. "Ah, and what about this?" Sarah swooned, closing her eyes, giving in to the sensations filling her.

"Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm- mmmmmmmmm," she moaned. It was amazing what he did, how it felt.

"Very good," he said. "Now I think I'm ready for the next stage. He started untying her from the chair. "I think we can use the couch over there. The gag can stay. I really like it."

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TRANSVESTISM

WITHIN A PARTNERSHIP OF MARRIAGE & FAMILIES.

BY YVONNE SINCLAIR

Continued from Vol. 7 Issue 4

SECOND (REVISED) EDITION.

Q³² I discovered my young son dressed in female clothes, and that he has a wardrobe which contains a large amount of girls' clothes, even underwear. He refuses to give them up and says he wants a sex change..

Firstly; your son has become a transvestite who has a very strong urge to dress. Very few transvestites in their early teens build up their own wardrobe of female clothing, they have a tendency to borrow either yours or a sister's. There are some who are really convinced that they 'think they are women', who, having read many of the books about people who have had sex-change operations, relate strongly with some of the feelings described in the early chapters of these books. What is seldom mentioned is that all transvestites, in the act of dressing, are to a degree stating that they would like to have been women. Most arrive at a sensible compromise, and confine their crossdressing for either sensual or sexual reasons, or just for sheer fun and enjoyment.

We must remember that there really are some that are transsexual, in sexual organs and secondary characteristics, but the early stages of transvestism closely parallel the claims of transsexuals in much of the published literature. It should be borne in mind that transvestism is the cradle of transsexuality; they are often one and the same. Many transvestites will claim that they are transsexuals to justify their wearing womens' clothes, hoping to gain acceptance in society while living in their chosen role. Some feel that because transvestism is often seen

as a masturbatory form of expression, and that they do not get sexual pleasure from dressing, then they believe that they *should* feel that they are women. In trying to present a better image, they disown their transvestism and say that the clothes have nothing to do with their transsexualism; often they have little other justification for stating that they want to be women. Only a very few who have had a measure of success, and are living the lifestyle of a woman among women, have hit the news. The most famous of recent years, Tula, who did so very well and became a top model, should not be regarded as typical, she is in all ways, an exceptional case. Others, who have a large measure of success, are those who reach an agreement with the firms for whom they work, that they continue in their work role, with the allowance that they wear female clothing. That they live and work as females are criteria laid down by the Gender Identity Clinics if they are eventually to be considered for surgery. This can, and often has, given rise to resentment from women with whom they work over the use of toilets, while they are still males awaiting surgery. Though many can reach a stage where they are partially successful, also, many discover that the social pressures outside the area of acceptance at work causes them to understand that there is more to being a woman than simply wearing a dress. Some, with personal wealth, do have private surgery, but find that, beyond their narrow group of other transsexuals, they are still not looked upon as women. Among themselves they tend to foster their beliefs that transsexuals are a race

apart, with a tendency to fill their newsletters with the 'wonders of womanhood'. Seldom do they know of the real lifestyles of other transsexuals who have to work very hard for their success; or of natural women by birth. In the case of your son, you must seek medical help. Your general practitioner will recommend you both to a psychiatrist; his decisions will be those of a person who has real insight. Depending on your son's age, and your own thoughts on the matter, he might in turn refer your son to a specialist consultant psychiatrist who deals with transsexuals. Acting on this professional medical advice, if you and your husband agree that eventual gender reassignment will be to your son's advantage, and you allow him to have treatment, then you are to be commended. To take this course at an early age will give him a better start in life than to have all the trauma later on, when you may not be able to accept it. There is *no alternative to professional medical advice*. If accepted for treatment at a Gender Identity Clinic, your son might come to terms with his nature at a stage prior to the actual sex change operation. The final decision on whether he has surgery must, of course, remain his alone. If help is sought through one of the transvestite/transsexual groups or transsexual societies, there is some danger that a biased view might be presented; i.e., that the road through to final surgery is the only 'true path'. Like most things in life, there is no single 'true path' which will suit all individuals. By all means make contact with such a group or society if you, or your son, feel that it will benefit

...continued on page 19

SM

For many people "Leather" has often become synonymous with "SM".

The words sadism and masochism are derived from the names of two European noblemen, the Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), and Austrian novelist Count Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895). Both men wrote about and are reputed to have performed acts that included erotic pain, domination and submission.

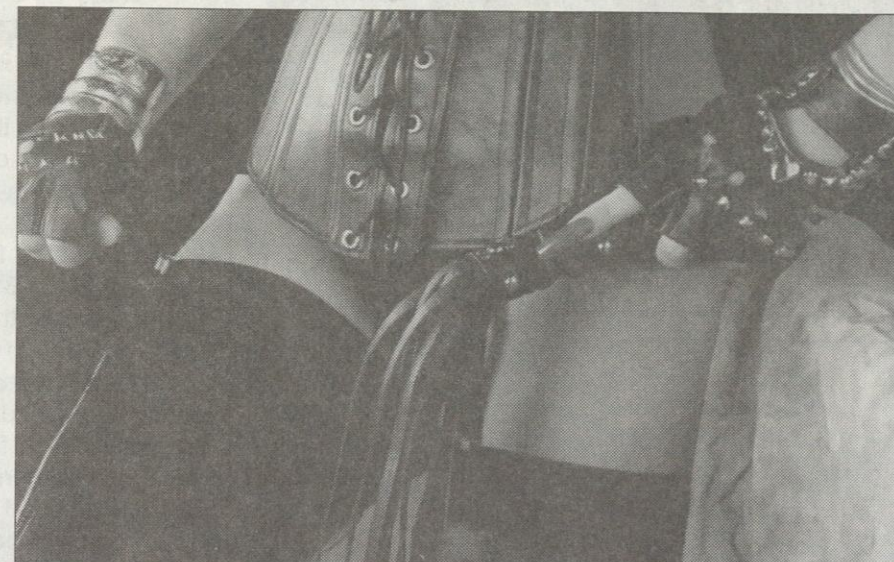
Sadomasochism (often written SM, S&M or S/M) as currently used by safe, sane, and consensual players, does not necessarily involve physical pain; it could be just domination and submission. A common thread through all SM activities is control. The following descriptions help to show what SM can include.

SM is not only about pain. SM is not abuse. SM is not without love. SM is not demeaning to women or men.

SM is about communication. SM is about parity. SM is about ritual. SM is playing cops and robbers, and the contented excitement of the victim - all tied up and the center of attention. SM is when the belt hits - first it hurts, then it glows...just the way we like it.

SM is about negotiation. SM is about roles. SM is about a journey. SM is the dentist from out of town who you keep in chains all weekend, while your friends come over to play with her in every possible

excerpt from *On The Safe Edge* by Trevor Jacques



way. SM is wondering what other executives would say (or think) if they knew about the welts and sticky panties under your OH-so-conservative suit. SM is about how those TIT clamps hurt just right; about the pain when the clamp bites a bit more and how the tits adjust to that.

SM is screaming "That's ONE, Madam! Thank you Madam! At the top of your lungs. SM is the thrill you get when the man at the party asks you to try on handcuffs,".. just to see how it feels. SM is dragging yourself to the gym, even though you desperately don't want to go. SM is your TOP making you wear a steel cockring to set off airport metal detectors. SM is about the TOP'S needs. SM is about fantasy. SM is about the Bottom's needs.

SM is putting your boyfriend into a FrenchMaid outfit to serve lunch to you and your women's lib girlfriends. SM is your slave holding up her hair, without being told, so that you can put a collar around her neck. SM is Errol Flynn tied up by pirates. SM is about humiliation.

SM is hearing people who know nothing about SM say how bad it is, and you want to giggle because they're so serious. SM is the quiet

typist by day, Dominatrix by night. SM is about controlling. SM is about being controlled. SM is about sleeping with both your hands and feet bound, and the dreams that you have. SM is your slave blindfolded, masturbating, and telling you his secret fantasies while you watch and listen to every wonderful word. SM is wishing you could afford two of everything in the leather store. SM is about submission. SM is about domination.

SM is identifying the gay Bottom on the bus, short haircut, polished boots, tattered jeans, fraying leather jacket and a heavy chain and padlock about his neck - quiet, upright, proud, centered and content. SM is about the exchange of power.

SM is about the tiny pair of gold handcuffs on your Chanel dress when you go to the opera. SM is trying to explain the massive frame and eyebolts to your little old landlady. SM is knowing that the first person to bottle the smell of new leather will die rich. SM is the uniform you wear on Saturday nights. SM is about giving pain. SM is about receiving pain. SM is finding the right pair of boots. SM is how hot her ass feels as you caress the welts. SM is hurting the one you love, just right.



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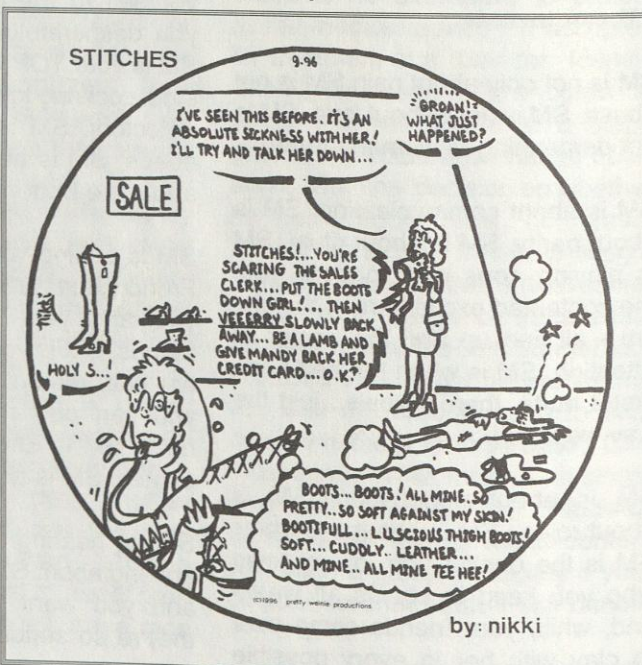
Who will be ILLUSIONS EMPRESS VII

Throw your wig into the ring and join a growing tradi-
tion. Empress VII, 1st & 2nd Princesses VII, who will
they be? I can think of many worthy candidates, so
don't be bashful or demure, sign up and then go home
and start making posters.

It's time to step forward and declare yourselves. You
have until May 31 to do so, but an early start is best.
Some practical things you should consider: first, don't
feel you have to follow in the footsteps of any of the
previous Empresses. You are free to set your own pri-
orities and schedules. Lisa, Teri and I, all had our own
agendas based first on Club service and growth and
secondly, on things that interested us as individuals.
There is no need to try and match or out do our efforts.
You are free to be yourself.

Don't not run because you think you will not be elected
Empress! Maybe you won't be elected Empress, but
you might become a Princess. Trust me, being a
Princess is also a great experience and it may lead to
being Empress one day. Besides, being a Princess
puts you in the unique positions of being able to wan-
der throughout the realm being totally wicked and good
naturally driving the reigning Empress crazy. Think
about it, could be fun!

Traditionally, at the Birthday Party you will be expected
to answer some deep and not so deep questions and
do a performance. Don't worry about this if your haven't
done it before. Just be yourself, after all that is what
everyone wants; a real person who will work for our
future in the best way they can.



by: nikki

Michelle Hart

Have you ever wanted to talk to someone about Your need to Crossdress?

Have you tried talking to a randomly
picked professional and heard,
"Well, I don't know much
about this subject, but
we can learn together!"

Do you want knowledgeable information on Crossdressing, Crossliving or Transsexualism?

If any of the above questions can be
answered by yes, call

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with knowledgeable information that has been
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crossdressing organizations, and operating a gender
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der positive workers and simply living the life of a
"Gender-Gifted" person.

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GIRLS UP NORTH SOCIAL UPDATE

1st Princess VI
Rachel C.

Once again it's time to report on what's been happening with the "girls" in the Great White North metropolis of Edmonton. There has certainly been enough going on to make even this party animal reporter's head spin!

Things slowed down after Winterfest II only long enough so your faithful reporter could catch her breath. I'm still grinning about how well our 2nd annual Winterfest event went. The hotel staff were excellent. **Alessandria**, a little old European lady who was our waitress, was so impressed with all of us that she was calling me her "son" before the evening was finished. We had a special social on April 3rd, when we had the national representative of the Dermablend line of cosmetics give a makeover demonstration. **Vikki** was the lucky girl chosen as the guinea pig for the demo. The demo went on for almost three hours and she covered almost every aspect that we could think of. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and learned a thing or two as well. **Linda Manners** was kind enough to bring in her professional camcorder in and made a tape of the demo. She then went and made some copies that are available for anyone interested. You can pick up your copy for only \$10.00. Believe me, it is well worth the price plus the profits will be going to the social club here in Edmonton. There are only a limited number of copies of the video available and can be purchased by contacting **Rachel** in Edmonton. Get yours while you still can. I would like to publicly thank **Donna** for having arranged this excellent event. Way to go, girl!

At our social on April 10th, we had **Joanna** from the Oil Sands mecca of Fort McMurray in town for a visit. We also had **Tina**, a new member who had just moved to Edmonton from the Yukon at our social (You never know where you'll find a crossdresser, do you!). The following Saturday, yours truly and Tina went down to Calgary for the social. It seems that Tina just can't get enough of being a girl. Who can blame her? Now, back to the social. There was a good sized crowd in attendance for the evening. The presentation on laser hair removal was fascinating and very well done. Afterwards, there were a couple of announcements related to the Birthday party in June. **Christina and Rachel** (yes, that's me) stated that they would be running for Empress this year. I wonder who else will be stepping forward in the next few weeks. Well, that's all that I have to say for this issue. Stay tuned for my next report. It promises to be a whopper of a report.

EVENTS CALENDAR CANADA & INT'L

ILLUSIONS CALGARY

Saturday, May 17
Regular Social
Brazilian Carnival

Organized by our new member Christina Frazier. Christina has a fun filled Gala evening planned, so be sure to attend. Carnival costumes, party favors, a draw and a "Latino" Theme Show are only a part of what's going to happen that night. So root around in your closet and find something colorful to wear if you want to blend. I'm going to blend, I'm wearing my blond hair and I'm gonna' be a banana from the Amazon all night!

Pride Parade

Last year a fair number of Illusions members turned out and expressed their support for our many friends in the Gay Community by participating in the "Gay Pride Parade." You are encouraged to equal or better our efforts of last year. See past Empress Teri for details.

Friday May 30
Regular Social, No theme

Saturday, June 14
Birthday Party VII

The evening belongs to the aspiring contestants for "Illusions" Empress VII! The Birthday party has become a tradition and Illusions members from all over have signified its importance through attendance and making it one of our biggest events of the year! The 7th Birthday Party this year will be, without a doubt, as "Grand" an event as any of those in the past. Plan to attend, show your past support for Michelle and Her Princesses as they step down and participate in the election of the new "Royalty" of the 7th House of the Illusions Social Club.

June 27 to 29

ARGRA Rodeo, Ya Hoo!
It's almost Rodeo time again! A camp out week end with out end. It just goes on and on and on. We have five campsites booked, the make-up tent (wardrobe central) will be on site, informal barbecues, Rodeo Dances, Drag Shows, friends from all over and nights with out end. If you haven't been

to the Rodeo git goin' Grrrl. Talk to: Teri, Michelle or Christine.

August, 23
GIRLS OF SUMMER V
at Money Pennies.

There are no Illusions Socials during the month of August! Girls of Summer, a Gala night of friendship, cuisine and performance arts fills the gap! Also, Girls of Summer is the major fund raiser for the Illusions Social Committee for the year. Traditionally held at Money Pennies, this location has yet to be confirmed. So watch in the next Illusion Magazine for all the details. But, remember the date: Aug 23. 1997 and keep it open as you have in the past.

ILLUSIONS EDMONTON

Thursday, May 8
Fashion Show

A Spring/Summer fashion show for all those girls who can't get enough. This time, Mariposa will provide the clothing.

For dates of upcoming
Edmonton Socials or for more
information, call Roxanne or
Rachael at (403) 486-9661
or (403) 488-3234

COMMUNITY BITS AND PIECES

SHOE RAFFLE

Sponsored by Gina,
Duchess Exterior
GETTO BLASTER RAFFLE
Sponsored by Karen,
Duchess Interior

We will need your help in both buying and selling tickets, so please offer your help to the sponsors. The proceeds from both of these raffles will go to the Social committee to help fund future events at the Club Socials!

ARGRA

Ongoing dances throughout the year. We are welcome to come any time. Michelle, Brenda, Monica, Stephanie, Susan and Teri went to

the last one after one of the Club Socials and had a fun time.

NATIONAL BRITISH COLUMBIA May 22 -25

the Courage to Love
A retreat program for gays, and lesbians, partners, bisexuals and Transgendered communitie. Naramata Centre, for more information call (250) 496-5751, local 200 or e-mail naramata@vip.net

VICTORIA
Pride Week July 1-6 1997
Pride Parade & Festival July 6, 1997

INTERNATIONAL

May 4

1st Annual gender PAC Political Conference, Washington, DC
riki@pipeline.com
FREE to all TG-identified people

May 5-6

2nd National Gender Lobby Days
Washington, DC, Ricki Wilchins,
274 W. 11 Street, New York, NY
(212) 645-1753 riki@pipeline.com
FREE to all TG-identified people

May 15-16

Paradise in the Poconos
PO Box 61263, King of Prussia PA
19406-1263 (610) 640-9449
(crossdresser oriented)

May 21-25

Esprit "95"
Port Angeles, WA
PO Box 873,
Kirkland, WA 98083-0873

June 4-8

Be All You Can Be
PO Box 342, Chicago, IL, 60690

June 19-22

2nd International Congress on Crossdressing, Sex, and Gender Issues, Congress Registration, 987 Old Eagle School Rd., Ste. 719, Wayne, PA 19087, (610) 640-9119 (610) 648-0257 Fax, congrs2@cdspub.com (focus on professionals but open to all)

July 16-20

5th Annual Spouses Partners International Conference for

Education (SPICE)
Peggy Rudd, PO Box 5304, Katy, TX 77491-5304.
(918) 343 -1953 (Mary Jane)
melpeg@phoenix.net or
http://www.pmpub.com
(crossdresser oriented)

August 3-10

Dignity Cruise to Alaska
with Peggy Rudd., For more info write to PO Box 5304, Katy TX 77491-5304. Call Brenda at 1-800-247-7021

August 9-11

3rd Annual FTM International Conference, Boston MA, 5337 College Ave, #142, Oakland, CA 94618, (617) 683-1095
(female-to-male identified people)

September 4-7

Rites of passage 7, Guerneville, CA c/o Wendy Kaiser, 246 Lebanon Road, North Berwick, ME 03906, (207) 676-5870, WKaiser@aol.com

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Roxanne or Rachel

Victoria Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Pride Society
PO Box 8016, Station Central, Victoria, BC V8W 3R7
Tel (250) 995-2992 (24 hr. msg line) e-mail robbs@uvic.ca

Xpressions

PO Box 223, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1B2
The club provides events and outings to enhance the transgender experience and the ultimate goal of being comfortable dressed in public.

Get your events listed
Illusion Magazine
(403) 236-7072 or
fax (403) 275-6443

Empress VI Michelle Hart

This area has been left intentionally blank due to privacy considerations.

The year has come and gone so quickly that I can't believe it. My Reign as Illusions Empress VI is almost over. This is the last issue of "Illusion" Magazine before the Seventh Birthday party and the crowning of the next Empress of Illusions. That means that it is time to say good bye. My Reign as 1st Princess V and then this my current Reign as Empress VI, has given me numerous opportunities to represent the Illusions Social Club at many worthwhile Community events throughout Alberta. It has been a taxing schedule sometimes, but always fun in the end. So, to those that have

made this aspect of my Reign a solid reality and enjoyable at the same time, Thank you.

Fund raisers, "Glittery" parties and Community related events are only one part of being "Royalty" at Illusions. Playing an active role on the Social Committee, organizing the bi-monthly Social Events, Seminars, special guests and out on the Town Escapades are others. I would like to thank 2nd Princess Christine for always being there to take my place when circumstances required it. Despite the cares that come with raising a young family, Princess Christine rose capably to each occasion with enthusiasm. I would like to thank Karen, Duchess Interior for her diligent work with new members and keeping the Club Library organized this past year. Duchess Exterior, Gina, did exactly as I suspected she would and represented Illusions and our CD lifestyle at numerous locations throughout Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge. Thank you Gina. Teri, Melanie and Jessica also worked with Princess Christine, Karen and Gina on the Social Committee. A special thank you to you all for your efforts on behalf of the membership. Empress V, Teri did not vanish after her Reign was over. She stuck around, served as an active member of the Social Committee and offered me much advice and tangible support during this past year. All I can say is thank you Teri, I really appreciated your help.

I have left 1st Princess VI, Rachel to the last. Rachel's situation is unique. She not only gained all the duties that come with being a 1st Princess, she also inherited the leadership of the Edmonton Chapter of the Illusions Social Club. In fact, her schedule of responsibilities if not greater,

then has been at least equal to my own. From all reports, Princess Rachel has done a great job of meeting the needs of our "Grrrls" in Edmonton. Added to that is the fact that when ever I summoned her to an important event in Calgary, Rachel was always there. So Thank you Rachel for your support and an accomplished Reign as 1st Princess VI.

To the greater Illusions membership, particularly those who took the time to write me the many letters of congratulations, advice and encouragement, thank you for your efforts. I hope I have met your expectations and served you well. My election platform was one of "stewardship"; maintaining the good things achieved at Illusions in past years and providing some new opportunities. I have done my best to stay close to the agenda of my platform. As with all things the passage of time creates new conditions that have to be dealt with. Sometimes this is at the expense of other things despite the best of intentions. Well, even though I am saying goodbye, my Reign is not quite over and maybe some things still left undone will be accomplished yet. We'll see.

One of the privileges that comes with being a Princess or Empress and what I am going to miss most is having my own column in the Illusion Magazine. I want to thank Christine and Barbie for providing this opportunity, and particularly thank them for allowing me to write as I please. My writings have never been edited for content, just poor language practice. I want the readership to understand just what a great privilege that is when Editors will stand back and allow you to express yourself as you feel even though they may sometimes disagree with your opinion.

By happenstance, I am the first married Empress of Illusions. Being the wife of the Empress doesn't always bring you into the limelight so it appears. Many times through out the year Brenda was left on the sidelines while I received the majority of attention. Still she traveled to just about every Social or event that I attended this year. She has been instrumental in helping me with all the things I have done, whether it be driving when I am tired or helping get the "Pink Palace" ready for another Social. I was very happy when the Edmonton Grrrl's recognized Brenda's efforts by crowning her with a Rhinestone Tiara at Winterfest '97. They gave her the official title of Consort to the Empress. Cool! Thanks Edmonton and thank you Brenda. Without your support I could not have been Empress this year. It's been a glorious two years and now I bid you Adieu. I look forward to the Crowning of the 7th Empress of Illusions at the Birthday Party on June 14. I wonder who it will be?

This area has been left intentionally blank due to privacy considerations.

1st Princess VI Rachel

Wow! What a year this has been. It seems like the sixth birthday party was only yesterday, yet so much has happened since that wonderful night. Throughout this year I have tried to represent the club at public events and through participation in organizations such as GLCCE and the ISCWR here in Edmonton. I have also tried to reach out to anyone who has shown an interest in, or was curious about our transgenerism.

The positive reaction that I have received throughout the year tells me that many people want to understand us and many others are beginning to realize that we are not something to be feared as they may have thought.

A lot of people still seem surprised when they find out that there are so many crossdressers out there. This tells me that there is still a long way to go. Since this is my last column, there are so many "girls" that I must thank for all their help and hard work this past year. In Edmonton, all of our achievements have been the result of a group effort. I would like to begin by thanking Marsha for being there for the club especially in those early years and showing me that we can all be who we want to be. The same goes for Dixie, who still continues to help when she can and keeps me on my toes with her humour(?) and tangential thinking. I would like to thank Linda Manners and Michelle (the one from Edmonchuck) for their enthusiasm and support for seeing a need in the club and offering to fulfill that need. I want to thank Brett for her support throughout the year, especially her recognizing the occasional time when I needed a gentle nudge to do something and giving me that nudge! I should also thank TJ for her hard work with the social committee and for coming up big on short notice to rescue one of our socials.

I would like to thank Joanne for her occasional comments that helped bring me back down to earth. Then there is also the irrepressible Lady Blue, who has always been there for us girls whenever we needed someone to talk to. She is one of the best cheerleaders we girls could ever have. We are indeed lucky to count her as a friend. Thanks to the ever quick witted Sonya,

who opened her doors to me and so many of us girls when we visited Calgary. This act of kindness I have to acknowledge, since it has probably helped make so many weekends out even more memorable (and that is not even mentioning the glorious breakfasts that she concocts). A special thank you goes to Krystal for making this past year possible. I must also give my deepest thanks to Roxanne, who was there beside me when I was ready to take another step in my journey. Her support and friendship will always mean a lot to me.

Last, but definitely not least, is our Empress Michelle and her consort Brenda. Brenda has shown unflinching support for Michelle throughout the year. Words can barely express my thanks for all Michelle has done during her reign. Whatever she has done during her reign, it has always been with the best interests of the club at heart. Her constant support of what we have done here in Edmonton is truly gratifying. Our long conversations on many topics throughout the year were always interesting and often enlightening. It is time for me to say one last thank you to all of you that I have met through Illusions. You have all helped to make this the best year of my life. Adieu.

RACHEL FOR EMPRESS VII

Why Rachel for Empress, you might ask? Perhaps it's because I had so much fun being 1st Princess VI. If you figure it out, please let me know. Seriously though, I feel that this last year has been, in many ways, a great year for the club in both Calgary and Edmonton. While some may say that there may have been some bumpy moments, I also see that we as a group have made even greater inroads into everyday society and the alternate lifestyle community. I believe our ultimate goal should be to gain acceptance from society for who and what we are. We should be able to be the "girls" we want to be, whenever we want to. At the same time, we also have to remember that we must also be able to have some fun and hopefully even learn a few things along the way. One thing that I have noticed is that this club has been at its best when we all worked together. As Empress, I will work with everyone to continue on the road begun by Empress IV Lisa and carried on by Empresses Teri and Michelle. While I may not live up to their standards, I will do the most I can to make this club as good as it can be for all our members. Remember, Vote for Rachel. She has the legs and will take you further!

2nd Princess Christine

This area has been left intentionally blank due to privacy considerations.

It's hard to believe but the year is almost up. This is my last chance to write to you as 2nd Princess Christine Rose as this is the last issue of the magazine before our annual Birthday Party and selection of next years Royalty.

I have a number of things I would like to get off my chest (and I'm not talking about hair, There is also a couple of things I would like to get on my chest as well, but that is another subject for another day.)

Now where was I?

Oh yes, I was about to say thank Empress Michelle and Princess Rachel for all the hard work they did over the past year on behalf of the membership.

This has been a year of changes, and not everyone likes change in general and not everyone likes the specific changes that have been made. On the other hand many people see the changes as a positive thing. Whether you like the changes or not, change is a fact of life.

One of the biggest changes has been the move of our meeting facilities. I see the move of our facilities to be a very good thing. We now have a place we can call

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our own. We no longer have to setup and tear things down before and after each meeting. It will take some time and effort to get the new room looking the way we want to but we have the opportunity to really make it something special. We are extremely fortunate to have such a place, most clubs do not have a permanent facility like this they can call home.

Now let me say a few words about the most controversial change, the Magazine. I will not spend much time here on my personal views of the changes. (I have written a separate letter I hope will be published on that subject.) Suffice to say I have mixed feelings about the new magazine. The point I would like to make here concerns how members respond and react to the changes.

It seems that a number of people are so unhappy with the image the new magazine is projecting that they have decided not to renew their membership and to stop coming to our socials. I support everyone's right to do as they see fit and I can certainly understand how they feel, but it seems to me to stop coming to the socials because you don't like the magazine is like cutting off your nose to spite your face. If you feel strongly about the magazine then write a letter expressing your concerns, call Barbie or Christine and tell them how you feel, and if you feel strongly enough about it then don't renew your membership, but PLEASE DON'T STOP COMING TO THE SOCIALS! By not coming to the socials you only hurt yourself and the other members of the club. The members of the Social Committee (who did not have anything to do with the changes to the magazine) have worked hard to put on socials for the members. The people who have continued to come out to the socials, miss seeing and socializing with you. One last point, the money we charge at the door, when you come to socials goes towards covering the cost of renting the facilities. If enough members do not show up for the meetings, we will not be able to afford to keep our facilities, and that will hurt those members who do not have any other safe place to go out and express their feminine side.

Some of the best events of the year are coming up over the next few months. We have our Birthday Party, the ARGRA Rodeo and the Girls of Summer. The Illusions Social Club is not a magazine, it is not the meeting facilities, it is the people like you and me who get together with others who share and/or support their passion for the pleasures of crossdressing. Come on out, show off your favorite outfits, and have a great time!

TRANVESTISM...continued from pg. 10

him; it will provide social contact with other transsexuals and transvestites. He might find that, in his confusion, he thought he was transsexual and is actually a transvestite. Some of the transsexuals may be willing to point out the many hazards, difficulties and pains that lie in his path - as well as the 'wonders of womanhood'. If he is below the age of consent, he should always be accompanied to such meetings by a parent or guardian - there will be few members his own age. The strong views (dogma, even) of an adult could easily distort a young person's thinking. These people can offer friendship and social contact, but they are not qualified to judge the right course for your son. Far better to seek professional advice and assure him of the best possible chance of a happy life, than to accept the words of amateurs, which could lead to a major tragedy.

Some boys will think at a very young age that by dressing as a girl this will make them feel what they want to be at that time - a girl. In many life stories of transsexuals the claim is made that even at five to eight years old they knew they were 'born in the wrong body'. Most children of that age hardly know their five times table, let alone the difference between the sexes. They are at school, being trained in the acquisition of knowledge. This is based on memory, of retaining knowledge which gives them an awareness not only of the three 'R's', but that they are part of a family, brothers and sisters, playmates and friends, boys and girls. At this early age they see the clothing worn as being the difference between the sexes. They also begin to learn about love and jealousy, how to lie and cheat, and the difference between right and wrong. They can dress as cowboys or indians, spacemen or train drivers, but not as girls! So, to dress in girls clothes becomes taboo, and they

seek to keep this a secret. The act of dressing becomes a secret game. All children love secret games - their books are filled with stories based upon secrets; secrets from grown-ups, secrets from other groups of children; secrets from others. Here is his personal secret from the whole world! There is, however, the feeling that to be discovered would bring shame and rejection. This may be shown in certain behaviour patterns - we might see a boy holding a pair of girls' knickers at arms length as if they smelled; yet they might be clean. Already he has learned that clothing has meanings which are different for the sexes, and that knickers cover a part of the body which a boy also has, but different. Just how they are different is still a mystery, and as he learns more the mysteries become greater. To him all females have a mystery of behaviour; they act differently, and behave differently, as much as they dress differently. Girls wear softer and more colourful materials, shiny or trimmed with lace. Great fuss is made of underclothing - yet it is hidden. These garments, which might seem to him to be the finest of what they wear, are immediately covered by dress or skirt, and the hem pulled down to conceal them from view. Yet the boy can see, on advertisement boardings, in magazines and books, pictures of women displaying underwear which is very beautiful - yet if he watches as his mother or sister is getting dressed, he might be told not to be a 'Peeping Tom'. We set standards that give rise to more confusion - the mystery deepens!

Making it work for YOU

Illusions Social Club exists due to the hard work of the volunteers who clean, buy supplies and contribute to this magazine. Please offer your help and suggestions to Christine and Barbie. Your help is appreciated by us all.

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your letters...continued from page 6

social club member and to some people is the only justification for paying their yearly dues. Perhaps we should just have people pay their yearly dues for being a member of "ILLUSIONS" social club. The dues would give them the "Right" to be able to come to "ILLUSIONS" social functions and pay the door fee to enjoy the facility. (Much the same as if you were to join a golf and country club for example.) The dues would also allow them to have their picture and bio in the "ILLUSIONS" registry. Then as a member if you wanted to get the magazine you could pay a subscribers fee just like non-members have to. I'm sure that this scenario would cause way more feathers to be ruffled. Either way we are bound to have people who don't like the decisions made.

Registry

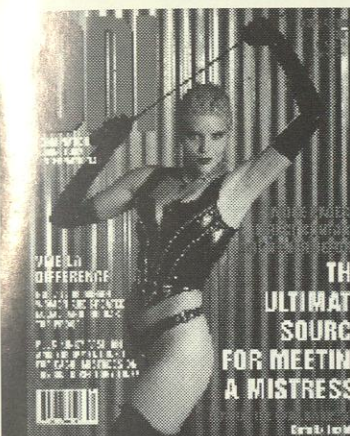
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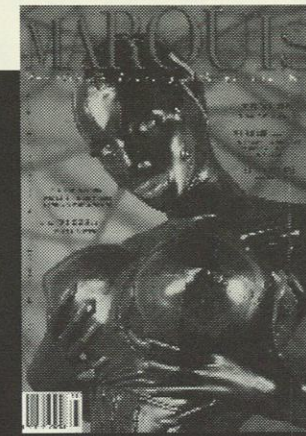
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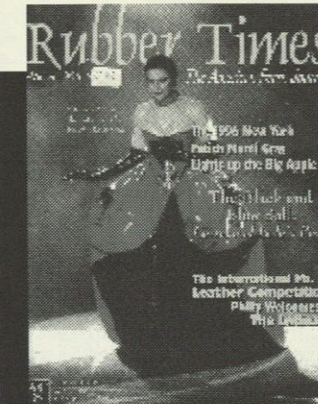
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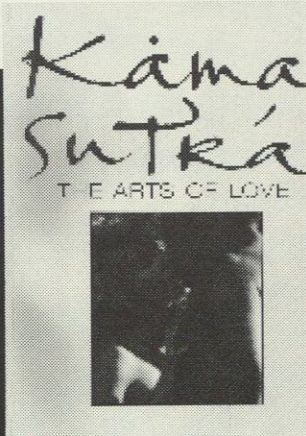
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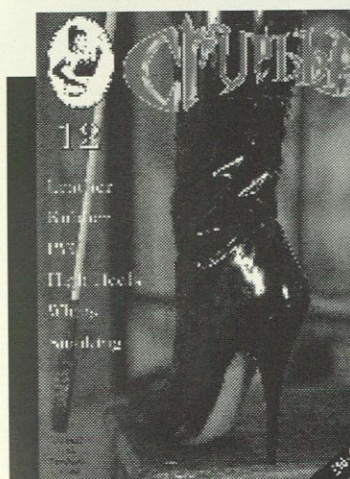
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